DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 112 756 HE 006 740

AUTHOR Walker, Donald E.
TITLE Universities as Management Arenas.
INSTITUTION National Association of Coll. and Univ. Business Officers, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Aug 73
NOTE 5p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Association of College and University Business Officers, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036
JOURNAL CIT Studies in Management; v3 n2 Aug 1973

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; Administrative Organization; Administrative Policy; Collective Bargaining; Decision Making; *Educational Administration; *Higher Education; Leadership Responsibility; *Leadership Training; *Management Systems; Power Structure; Problem Solving; *University Administration

ABSTRACT

The process of university leadership is examined in terms of (1) the development of more sophisticated models of the kind of organization a university is, and (2) the development of more precise delineations of the nature of the multiple leadership tasks that must be performed in a university setting. The university is viewed as an "organized anarchy," characterized by problematic goals, unclear technology, and fluid participation. It is suggested that the job of developing managers for higher education consists realistically in dividing the tasks that confront university administrators into small enough and specialized enough units so that they can be managed. Special leadership skills for each task could then be taught. A second leadership task is to increase institutional sensitivity to minor irritations; a third, to define goals and make more effective use of the resources of the institution in reaching them. Other areas of leadership concern public accountability in the use of resources, collective bargaining stresses, the development of coordinating and planning groups as extra campus levels, and manpower planning and development in universities. Universities must be better understood as management arenas in order to develop more effective leadership in transition periods. (LBH)

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NACUBO THE COLLEGE and UNIVERSITY BUSINESS OFFICER
STUDIES IN MANAGEMENT
August 1973

ED112756

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Institutions as organized anarchies: a discussion of short ball hitters, chimney effects, tie-breakers, and the p[illegible] the buck, then react syndrome.

UNIVERSITIES AS MANAGEMENT ARENAS

By Donald E. Walker

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There has always been some ambiguity about the process of university leadership. Among the more honest of the breed, or perhaps I should say "self-critical" members of the profession, there is an occasional confusion concerning just who is leading whom when the action is the heaviest. This kind of uneasiness about leadership roles in universities is reflected to some extent in the current literature. This has not always been the case. At one time, if my memory of the conventional wisdom in the field is accurate, it was felt that the university administrator, at least a successful administrator, possessed certain characteristics which were, if not innate, then at least characteristics hard won in the school of trying and ennobling experience. These leadership qualities were viewed as transferable certainly from one university administrative role to another and probably from university leadership to every conceivable social situation requiring a helmsman and a compass. When the characteristics of the university administrator at whatever level were outlined, they came out as a kind of a composite list personalizing the insights of the major literary Biblical prophets, the Boy Scout oath, the friendlier descriptions of the papacy, combined with sort of a thumbnail sketch of General Pershing.

Superstitious Learning

It appears to me as I think back over the literature that this general approach to the problem was superseded by some feeling for "context" in university leadership. The view was held that a successful university administrator was a person who had certain desirable characteristics which corresponded with the particular needs of the specific situation. Under either of the two models mentioned, obviously the task of training the university administrator seemed difficult if not impossible. On bad days, I believe, accomplices could be found to the view that the entire spectrum of proposals for the training of university administration, while now more frequently placed in sophisticated theoretical context, remains a morass of what James March refers to as "superstitious learning," highly derivative insights from a scanty few research studies combined with "plain vanilla" good judgment and experience. I, for one, believe that such cynicism is unjustified. We need not surrender the problem totally to the intuitionalists, nor have we done so. There have in recent years been very sophisticated and consecutive approaches to the training for academic administrators. The two strategies which have had the most influence have been the case study approach, and the internship training programs of the American Council on Education and other like-minded groups and campuses. Few would quarrel with these approaches to the training of university administrators either in conception or, for the most part, in practical results.

The third approach to the training of university administrators has been a bit more piecemeal but nonetheless, I think, successful. And this is the strategy of providing specialized workshops for university administrators in particular problem areas of concern to the academy at any point in time. I think it is fair to say that in spite of our increasing sophistication, our approach to the entire problem of training university leadership still has about it the qualities of a dialogue between Dr. Christian Barnard and Mary Baker Eddy with the extended proportions and contributions of each varying according to one's own observation, experience, and taste.

Let me suggest that the task of training university leaders may be advanced in effectiveness if we direct attention to two tasks: first, the development of more sophisticated models of the kind of organization a university is; and, second, the development of more precise delineations of the nature of the multiple leadership tasks which must be performed in a university setting. To address ourselves first to the problem of the nature of the university, I would like to direct attention to a volume soon to be published on the *American College Presidency*. The volume is authored by Michael Cohen and James G. March. The model proposed for a university by Cohen and March is that of an organized anarchy. Although I am certain each of us when communing with an impatient oracle has harbored the suspicion that the university could be characterized pejoratively in exactly such terms, Cohen and March have raised the concept to well ordered majesty. The authors define an "organized anarchy" very precisely. They view such an organization as characterized by:

1. Problematic goals—"the organization appears to operate

Donald E. Walker, *president of Southeastern Massachusetts University, presented this paper on the dynamics of personnel at the NACUBO annual meeting in July, 1973. A prolific writer, sociologist and seasoned administrator, Dr. Walker previously served as acting president of San Diego State College, and as vice chancellor for student affairs and senior lecturer in the Graduate School of Administration of the University of California, Irvine.*

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on a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences. It can be described better as a loose collection of changing ideas than as a coherent structure. It discovers preferences through action more often than it acts on the basis of preferences."

2. Unclear technology—"although the organization manages to survive, and, (where relevant) produce, it does not understand its own processes. Instead, it operates on the basis of a simple set of trial-and-error procedures, the residue of learning from the accidents of past experiences, imitation, and the inventions born of necessity."
3. Fluid participation—"the participants in the organization vary among themselves in the amount of time and the effort they devote to the organization; individual participants vary from one time to another." ". . . The boundaries of the organization appear to be uncertain and changing."

Cohen and March point out "these properties are not limited to educational institutions; but they are particularly conspicuous here." In presenting an overview of their position, the authors state "the American college or university is a prototypic organized anarchy. It does not know what it is doing. Its goals are either vague or in dispute. Its technology is familiar but not understood. Its major participants wander in and out of the organization. These factors do not make the university a bad organization or a disorganized one; but they do make it a problem to describe, understand, and lead." Finally, for purposes of the present discussion, Cohen and March conclude that ". . . organized anarchies require new theory of management. Much of our present theory of management introduces mechanisms for control and coordination that assume the existence of well-defined goals and technology, as well as substantial participant involvement in the affairs of the organization. When goals and technology are hazy and participation is fluid, many of the axioms and standard procedures of management collapse."

At this point it might be well to observe that the problems of administering an organized anarchy are not uniquely the problems of the university presidency. All constituencies of the university, including other administrators, faculty, students, trustees, and the general public, are caught up in the problems occasioned by the nature of the organization. Certainly it will not be within my purview to attempt to develop new theories of administration for an "organized-anarchy" or even to reproduce entirely the insightful theories of Cohen and March. The Cohen and March volume, however, will, in my view, have noticeable impact on future perspectives on the administration of complex organizations, particularly universities. The implications of the Cohen and March theories would seem to be that for the foreseeable future, we may need to be "short ball hitters" in our search for techniques for leadership training for universities.

Fitting Skills Into Slots

There are identifiable kinds of skills that are useful in university leadership roles, even in universities viewed as "organized anarchies." There are functions that we know need to be performed day to day if leadership responsibilities are to be discharged adequately. The skills and functions of university leadership with which we are concerned may not fit comfortably into the boxes provided in the charts included in the standard textbooks on administration. Some reconceptualizing of leadership responsibilities in a university may be needed. Dr. Roger Heyns, president of the American Council on Education, in a recent address to the national assembly of the American Association of University Administrators, referred to a number of leadership tasks that confront university administrators. His analysis presents a good model. He proposes, if I hear him correctly, that the job of developing managers for higher education consists realistically in dividing the tasks which confront university administrators into small enough and specialized enough units so that they can be managed. He suggests further that administrators may be trained in the skills necessary for these specific tasks of management. With the full recognition that the agenda for which trainings are required may shift from time to time and the kinds of skills necessary to administer a university may be modified in an "organized anarchy," nevertheless, the list proposed by Roger Heyns is convincing: first, "to renew our dedication to equal opportunity and affirmative action goals." I believe Dr. Heyns is suggesting that there may be special leadership skills required in working in the equal opportunity and affirmative action areas of the university. He is not, I believe, simply suggesting that persons working in these areas be minority persons because their acceptance is higher with minority groups. There may, indeed, be real and subtle skills of administration involved in these working areas for which training can be provided and in which real leadership other than charismatic leadership may be developed.

"Low Grade Irritations"

Heyns lists as a second leadership task "the increasing of institutional sensitivity to low grade irritations." Here again, Dr. Heyns suggests that there may be real skills involved at the interpersonal level in making universities aware of and resolving frictions within an organization, particularly universities. Certain types of personalities are more carminative, unquestionably, but there may be more than fortunate personality characteristics in the administrative ability to identify and reduce conflict. As a third task Dr. Heyns lists "institutional goal setting and the more effective use of the resources of the institution in reaching these goals." The facts of the case are that universities are moving, dynamic institutions with assigned goals and also functional goals. Both types of goals change from time to time. Further, the assigned goals and the functional goals do not always correspond. The turmoil of the 60's illustrates this problem very neatly. Part of the problems of universities in the 60's arose from the fact that universities had been, from one point of view, too successful. Further, they had claimed to be able to do more if given the opportunities.

Until the 60's universities had several perceived functions. The pursuit of the intellectual enterprise with all of its many ramifications, apparati, and values was primary, at least as these purposes were outlined in catalogue statements. By some, these goals were viewed as the only legitimate goals of the university.

It was apparent, however, that in fact in an increasingly technologizing society universities provided the principal gateway into the professions.

At the level of functional reality it was apparent that universities also served as a way to keep young people out of the job market for a period of time.

Universities also served on occasion as gathering places for

public recreation such as the "Big Game." Mass society needs gathering places. It requires situations where people can enjoy the feeling of intimacy without accepting the risks of high levels of personal interaction.

Universities served, also, as marriage markets.

Finally, universities served to socialize people to the values of a particular class and, by so doing, to provide some of the necessary skills and reinforcements for social mobility.

In the 60's other assignments were placed upon universities. (a) Universities were assigned the task of providing large bodies of scientific and technical knowledge to a world that was rapidly competitively technologizing. (b) Since the universities had claimed to make better people, the society looked to the universities to provide the social cement in a society where the curve of individual behavior was widening. (c) As campus disruptions began, the university was expected to be the principal agency of law and order for the younger generation of the middle class. At this point, the new left added their demands that the university be a principal agent of social change, and the far right, in turn, insisted that the university be a center for intellectual and moral potty-training.

Goal Setting for the Publics

The problem of institutional goal setting is important to a university. If indeed, however, the University (with a capital) is an "organized anarchy" as Cohen and March suggest, the task may be different in nature than traditionally conceived. If a university is in fact an institution whose "perimeters are vague" and whose goals grow out of the activities in which it engages, then the traditional industrial model for goal setting and goal achieving may be in fact peripheral to the realities of university administrative life. The publics of a university do not perceive the realities of university goal setting as described by Cohen and March as either realistic or acceptable.

A need arises, therefore, to explain the shifting and functional goals of universities to the public or to identify some goals in programmatic terms which will satisfy the need of the public and legislatures for more precise answers to questions concerning the direction of institutions than those which Cohen and March might be able to supply from their theoretical context. The question as to whether traditional goal setting is meaningful for universities or not becomes peripheral when the many publics of universities demands such goals. Such goal setting and goal achievement is not managed well by universities. The standard device employed for goal fixing is the development of a master plan for the university during an intensive year of committee meetings. Usually the final master plan is handed down from "above" in the form of a report from a "blue ribbon committee." After the plan is filed, only the most compulsive would demand that it be brought out from time to time to be updated in the light of what has really taken place on the campus. Frivolous as it may seem, this exercise is apparently useful to universities in difficult to understand ways and is necessary for the public. Perhaps more systematic and rational approaches to the problem of goal setting in "organized anarchies" are possible. In any event, trained leadership and rather specialized leadership may be required to deal with the complexities of this problem area.

Heyns' fourth task is "accountability in the use of resources." In the last year or two, universities have become increasingly aware of the need for more sophisticated accounting and reporting procedures. I believe this is particularly true of state institutions, but unquestionably to some extent the need is felt also in private institutions. The pressure on the private institutions has been occasioned by fiscal stringency and the need to decide where to cut and conserve resources in the face of declining enrollments and rising costs. The prospects of "steady-state" operation and possible cutbacks together with increasing competition for the public tax dollar are placing similar requirements on public institutions. As available models for budget reporting and allocation have become more sophisticated, the need for specialized leadership in this area has become more apparent.

The fifth task is "collective bargaining." It seems apparent that if institutions of higher learning continue to be "stressed" by outside or inside forces, they will retreat to familiar models of defense. In this nation the union model is available and historically has been effective in bringing about certain desired changes. Academics, as yet, do not know quite how the union model fits the university. Meetings of academics to discuss the problems and the developments in the field of collective bargaining seem to compound the confusion at increasingly exalted levels. Although there is some evidence that collective bargaining on campuses may become more concerned with all phases of a university's functioning including academic governance, it is my opinion that the best prediction foresees collective bargaining in colleges and universities drifting in the direction of more exclusive concern with wages, hours, and working conditions in the long term. Whatever the future trend, however, it seems apparent that rather specialized leadership will be required within university administrations to manage the problems occasioned by unionization and collective bargaining contract interpretation and enforcement. I will say more about this in broader context presently.

Specialized Response To Public Accountability

Heyns lists as a sixth leadership arena "the development of coordinating and planning groups at extra campus levels." The relationship of the campus to coordinating and planning groups located "off campus" physically and sometimes psychologically is becoming a very real issue in higher education. There have always been outside incursions into American higher education since the Morrill Land Grant Act in the 1860's. Such incursions have always been uncomfortable for universities and have always been greeted as unwelcome intrusions. In the long term, however, while such interferences can and have been mischievous on occasion, the very vitality of American higher education may be due in no small degree to this intrusive habit of the society. Specialized leadership, however, may be required to deal with increasing tendencies of legislatures and other groups to concern themselves more or less intimately with American higher education.

Specialized leadership will be needed to work with legislators and other groups to interpret the university to its publics, to plead its causes, and to transmit in turn to the university responsible public concerns.

In the arena of "manpower planning and development in universities," there remain two additional problems to which I would direct attention. Certainly, a necessary approach to the training of leadership will be, as Roger Heyns suggests, to break leadership tasks down into "trainable" units. There will also be the need for some kind of synoptic or generalized leadership training. If this is the case, and if some type of generalized skills will be required at many levels of university administration including presidents, then I would suggest that

such leaders will need practice in the building and the effective use of management teams.

It is remarkably difficult to build top notch management leadership teams. The skills involved in creating and using such teams are subtle and complex. Here again, the question arises concerning the degree to which such skills are "inborn" or at least idiosyncratic and the extent to which they can be transmitted. Personally, I fall on the transmission side of the debate. I believe that skills in the training of and use of management teams can be identified, taught, and learned. The conscious identification of these skills and the effort to transmit them is one of the major jobs facing us in the arena of manpower management development for universities.

New Rational Structures Needed

I would add a final point. As one of the tasks of management development we should perhaps emphasize the need to create structures within the university which are more amenable to rational management procedures. Perhaps the organized anarchy of the university need not be so anarchic, at least not all of the time. The problem of training for leadership in universities may well involve the development of greater sophistication in the areas of conflict resolution and consensus seeking. I'm speaking now not of the interpersonal skills necessary to resolve conflict and to build consensus, but skills in the development of the administrative and institutional structures which make such tasks easier. I propose an example from the new contract between the University Trustees and the Faculty Federation at Southeastern Massachusetts University. Under the previous contract when conflicts developed between faculty members or between a faculty member and his department, the structure required that the problem be presented to an administrator. Administrators are, by common consent, viewed on most campuses as the least competent and the least credentialed members of the academic community to resolve such conflicts. In a very real sense this perception is correct. Nevertheless, once having been referred to an administrator, the matter was appealable only from one layer of administration to another until the issue was finally resolved in the Board of Trustees. Because of this structure, there was a "chimney effect" built into the administrative structure of the university which conducted the "heat" automatically up the chimney. This situation was imperfect not only because it made life more difficult for administrators. It was poor because the solutions reached to problems were not usually as good as solutions, by definition, that could have been developed by those closer to the facts.

Additionally, the chimney effect of conflict resolution that funnels problems up an administrative flue has a deleterious effect on faculty decision making. Hard decisions oftentimes are made, because the administrative chimney is seen as the place to always start the fires and to generate the heat. To let the deans or the president make the tough decisions provides faculty with a cornucopia of grievances in which administrators are always the bad guys. The real point, however, is not that effective faculty decision saves administrators from "heat," but that better decisions are usually made when faculty judge faculty in responsible ways.

Effective governance of a university is dependent upon the willingness of faculty and administrators to share, accept, and exercise responsibilities that are concomitant with their roles in the university. The "pass the buck and then react syndrome" encouraged by an administrative chimney model for conflict resolution must be replaced by a model similar to that of a forest ranger or conservationist who sees and accepts the need and responsibility for controlled fires at strategic times and places to prevent the disasters of a holocaust.

The new union contract at SMU, and I propose it as illustrative rather than exemplary, provides for "tie-breakers" at various levels in the university structure so that quarrels, for example, between faculty member and faculty member are frequently settled by colleagues without an automatic appeal procedure up the administrative flue. The development of more rational low conflict susceptible structures for governance in university management may well become a specialized area for the training of the administrators. Collective bargaining is one way of developing low conflict susceptible structures for governance. It is not a panacea for the solution of the problems of a university, but it allows for the more rapid maturity of a university's functioning through the joint formalization of policies and procedures for effective governance. The best of academic governance is seldom created by a contract; the contract merely formalizes what more often than not was developed over long periods of time and proven successful in other instances.

The Berkeleys and Harvards of this country (to include the best of universities from coast to coast) have modes of operation and governance that are the product of long years of faculty concern and involvement. A university collective bargaining agreement is an eclectic document that borrows the best of what has been tried and proven, adds some innovative thought in instances, and formalizes these into a mutually agreed upon set of policies and procedures for university governance. When exercised properly, collective bargaining on the campuses can make giant steps toward institutional maturity.

Finally, it must be said that we are only in the very early stages in our understanding of universities as management arenas. We must broaden this understanding if we are to develop more sophisticated and skillful leadership in a period of transition for the society and for the university.

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